



*Go Hence;
Have More Talk of These Sad Things:
Reading and Relationality
in the English Language Arts Classroom*

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Abstract:

Drawing upon my own experiences as a high school English Language Arts teacher, I seek a satisfying response to offer students when they ask, “Why are we reading this?” Such a query often leads teachers and students to consider broader questions of the purposes of literature. This paper presents a hermeneutic exploration of the practice of teaching (with) literature in the high school classroom. Using the writings of Gadamer (1989/2013) and Sumara (1996, 2002), and their conceptualizations of aesthetic (literary) experience, I outline a process of engaging with students in their desire to understand their roles as readers in the classroom. In doing so, I make an argument for playful and dialogic interactions between reader and text—an approach that both retains the integrity of aesthetic experience, and also invites a relational pedagogy among those who share a literary reading.

Keywords: reading; hermeneutics; aesthetic experience; play; relational pedagogy; English language arts

Biographical Note

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